

Come with a Topic, Leave with a Speech
Who came with a topic?

The district runs extensive leadership training & COT at TLIs and other events throughout the year. Last summer, Carole Murphy, Program Quality Director and now District Director talked to me about the need for training for new Toastmasters. This workshop has extensive speaker's notes, the intent is that DDs or ADs could find 2-3 experienced TMs, split up the modules, tweak it to make it their own, and run a workshop for clubs in their area. It's on Zoom, but let's make it interactive: I'll ask questions, type them into the chat, we'll also have a Q&A session at the end of each module



Instructor's Notes:

The Millau Viaduct is the tallest bridge in the world, over the Tarn river gorge in the south of France. It's tallest tower is 343m high, 19m higher than the Eiffel Tower.

A great speaker takes the audience on a journey. The structure of the speech should be simple, straightforward and, when well-executed, transport the audience along without them really noticing. If the opening develops a connection with the audience, the structure provides sequence to the speech and simple transitions so the audience maintains their connection for the entire journey.

A speech structure is like air, no one notices it until it's not there, then everyone notices it.

Building a structure

This module will help you...

- Describe why it's important to:
 - Identify speech elements
 - Choose a logical order to structure those elements
 - Select transitions through the structure
- Develop a sensible structure for your speech



Here are a few elements you might use



Questions



Lists



Examples



Opinions



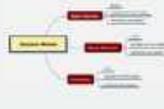
Quotations



Facts & Figures



Activities

Graphical
Elements

Emotions

Vivid
Descriptions

Declarations



Ideas

Abstract
Concepts

Stories



Humour

Instructor's Notes:

No speech will have all these elements, but almost all of them will include at least 3 or 4, and possibly more. As you develop the details of your speech, reflect back on your purpose to make sure they really do belong in this speech. Once you have the ideas, it's time to decide how to sequence them in a logical structure. This makes it easier for the audience to maintain their connection with the speaker as they transition from one topic to the next through their speech.

Scott's Approach:

I like to brainstorm ideas using a mind map, to get pieces of the speech together that I want to communicate

This module has many individual elements

Introduction
Objectives

For example, this module has:

- Facts & Figures
- Abstract concepts
- Examples
- Graphical elements
- Three body sections
- Activities

Recap Objectives
Conclusion

Instructor's Notes:

The overall structure of a speech is Introduction/Opening, Body and Conclusion/Closing (we covered Opening and Closing in the last module). But the elements on the last slide can apply throughout the speech.

Let's look at the structure of this educational module:

- Introduce to the purpose of speech structure and why it's important
- State the objectives, which is common in educational modules
- The body includes all of these elements
 - Enumerate the elements that could be included in a speech, with an example for the module and an activity
 - List different ways to structure parts of the speech body
 - Describe how to transition from one part to the next and another activity
 - Notice that the order of the body follows how you might construct a speech in practice
- Restate the objectives, again common in educational modules

Activity: Identify key elements of your speech

Purpose	On your Module 3 worksheet, decide what speech elements would be effective to convey the major points of your speech.
Process	<p>In question 3.1, review the example speech elements (or come up with some of your own), and write out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How you might express the primary points in your speech (just the names at this point),2. How you might express some of the secondary points if you know what they are,3. Notice the following:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. What types of elements do you have?b. How well does each one support your purpose?c. How will it connect with your audience?
Product	A list of the primary and potential secondary elements in your speech.
Post-activity debrief	Describe what types of elements you have and how they tie back to your purpose.

The 'best' speech structure...depends

- Chronological order or step-by-step sequence
- Spatial sequence
- Perspectives of different groups
- Topical sequences (sorted where appropriate)
- Paired/Triplet sequences

Instructor's Notes:

Explicitly state: "Now that we talked about speech elements, let's talk about how we sequence them into a structure." <it's used later as an example>

You know your content (it is your speech after all), so you have lots of context. Assume the audience has none. Have you ever listened to a speaker and gotten lost? What happened? You disengaged.

We talked about having an opening that engages your audience. Once they're engaged, you want to carry that engagement, if you lose it, then it's very hard to get it back. A structure that makes it easy for the audience to follow, which keeps them engaged from the opening to the closing.

A clear structure helps the audience stay engaged and organize the information in their minds, too, making it more likely they will understand it during your speech and retain it later. This is particularly effective in an informative or persuasive speech. When the audience leaves, you want them to take something away. If you provided a clear structure, they will be able to retain that better and remember what you said next week and next month.

Even better, a clear structure makes it easier for you to remember your speech!

Every speech can follow multiple different structures. Select this thoughtfully based on your purpose, audience and the context of your speech. There are many different approaches that each work well in different situations. It's as much art as science, and it helps to make intentional decisions about structure.

A few considerations—follow a general structure, but you don't need to be overly-precise if it comes across as too formulaic. An ideal structure is one that's easy to follow, where your audience barely even notices your explicit choices, they just know that the speech really flows nicely

Note that you can also nest these structures

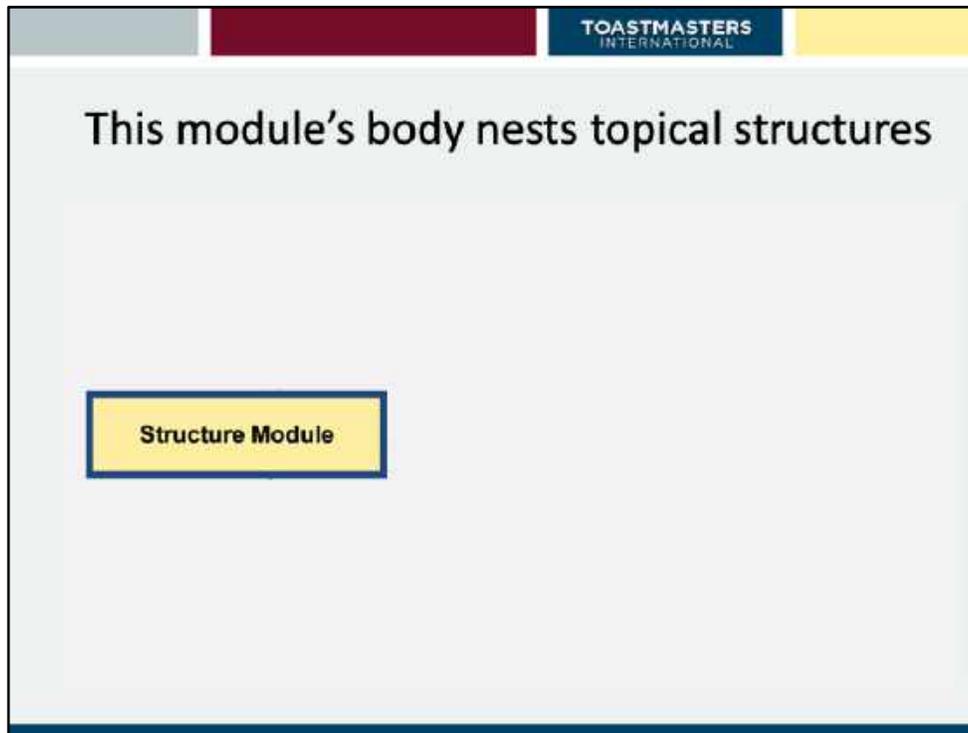
Chronological Order—Here, the speech follows time, which works if you're describing a sequence of events, whether it's historical or a story. Just be careful not to make it sound like "and then...and then...and then". Step-by-step sequence is very useful for a 'how to' speech where you're explaining a specific task, like a home renovation or how to fix something.

Spatial sequence helps emphasize structure, which could be geography (either BC, the prairies, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes or local, provincial and national), divisions in an organization, parts of a piece of equipment (automobile frame, engine, passenger area) or fashion (shoes, pants, shirts and accessories). The key is people can visualize the change in location/space.

Perspectives—present the impact of an event on different groups of people, like millennials, GenX and Baby Boomers, or people with different attributes like region (eg. Pipelines in Canada), economic level, or some other classification.

Topical--Find a set of related considerations that come from the specific topic, which don't relate to one of the others above. For example, speaking about a project might include why it's being proposed, how it will be executed and what the impact will be. Another might be different elements of a speech: Purpose, Opening/Closing, Structure and so on. A special case of this is to sort the properties in some order (specific example to general case to abstract concept, or smallest to largest in some measure).

Paired/Triplet sequences include: cause/effect, advantages/disadvantages, cost/benefit, problem/solution/next step and others are very effective depending on the content of your speech. Just be careful that you don't oversimplify a complex topic.



Instructor's Notes:

The module includes a topical structure that describes different elements of a speech body: speech elements are the fragments that you wish to include, speech structure is the order you sequence them and connectives are how you move from one to the next. They are presented in the order you might develop them when writing a speech (though in reality it's much more iterative).

Point out that this slide is the example from this speech. Ask people what they expect will happen next

Within each of these three structures lies a second, consistent topical structure: a list (abstract), an example from this module (real), and an activity to help you develop your speech body (even more real)

Activity: Classify/structure speech elements

Purpose	On your Module 3 worksheet, review options to structure the elements of your speech so they flow in a logical order.
Process	In question 3.2, review the different approaches available to sequence your speech: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Start by ordering the main points into a logical flow, there may be several options to choose from,2. Review the minor points within the main sections, and decide whether or not to use a specific sequence for those, too.
Product	Each participant will have a draft sequence for at least the major points of their speech.
Post-activity debrief	One person from each group will share the structure they selected.

Transitions help smooth the flow of ideas

- Internal preview or summary
- Signposts—explicit numbering or labeling
- Explicit transitions
- Implicit transitions
- Pause

Instructor's Notes:

Maybe make a really abrupt change of topic at the start of this slide as a counterexample to effective flow.

A speech that flows well keeps the audience engaged. The purpose of a transition is to ease the change from one topic to the next so your audience can follow you easily and stay engaged. These transitions are a common place for audiences to lose the thread and disengage, so it helps to make intentional choices. Transitions occur from opening to body, throughout points in the body, and again when you move into your conclusion.

Just like speech elements and structures, there are lots of different ways to do this, what works in one situation may not work in another.

Internal preview—“This afternoon I will be discussing A, B and C

Internal summary—“We have discussed A, B and C”

These are explicit guides to your audience, unless you're building up to a surprise ending for effect, most of the time you want to tell your audience exactly what you're doing. These techniques review it at the beginning or the end.

Signposts—these are explicit labels, often used with an internal preview or summary.

We'll talk about three reasons Macs are better than PC's: First..., Second..., and Third...". It can be effective, as long as you remember to use it with each point. "In summary" is also a signpost as you move into your recap and closing.

Like the other methods, explicit transitions state what you're doing. "We've talked about cats, now we're going to move on to discuss dogs". These work well with some of the structures like paired/triplet sequences: "Now that we understand the problem, let's look at options for a solution."

An implicit transition uses a bridging topic, perhaps an element (word or phrase) from a story can be repeated early in your next point. This works well in entertaining or persuasive speeches where you want to be smooth and conversational instead of drawing explicit attention to structure. <NEED A GOOD EXAMPLE>

Pause—after you finish one point, pause for a few seconds before moving onto the next one. This gives the audience time to catch up to you and reflect on what you just said. Often this is all you need, but you can also incorporate a pause with any of the other techniques.

What transitions did this module use?

- Internal preview
- Internal summary (to come)
- Explicit transitions
- Pauses

Instructor's Notes

Ask what techniques people saw in this module

Besides internal preview and summary (learning objectives slides), there were explicit transitions like —*“Now that we talked about speech elements, let’s talk about how we sequence them into a structure”*

Even moving within the three main points, you may have heard “How does this module apply these techniques?” and “How can you apply similar ideas to your speech?” when moving into your speech worksheets.

And hopefully I paused once in a while

Activity: Select your transitions

Purpose	On your Module 3 worksheet, review options to connect the major transition points of your speech.
Process	In question 3.3, consider the major transitions from one topic to the next in your speech: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consider how you can connect from one major section to the next, especially when you change topics, so you maintain audience connection,2. Look for any more abrupt changes in topic, and write out ideas for how you can maintain a flow the audience can follow easily.
Product	You will have identified how to manage the flow in your speech where you need intentional transitions.
Post-activity debrief	Describe the types of transitions you have and how you plan to handle them.

*“Learn the rules like a pro,
so you can break them like
an artist.”*

—Pablo Picasso



Picasso, self-portrait, 1966

Instructor's Notes:

The key message today: your speech structure should support your message, not drive it. Use structures that work, or don't follow any rules at all, Picasso never did.

Even the structure of defining your speech elements, then the structure, then the transitions will probably never happen in practice. It's typically a more fluid, iterative and chaotic process than that.

Building a structure

Reflect on how *you* can...



- Describe why it's important to:
 - Identify speech elements
 - Choose a logical order to structure those elements
 - Select transitions through the structure
- Develop a sensible structure for your speech

...please share one takeaway in the chat

Instructor's Notes:

Ask the participants for a couple of ideas they took away.

What questions are you sitting on?

